532 the masks is an entire world, and when it sets itself in motion in the public place, it dances the movement of the world, it dances the system of the world." (1)

1. Ibid., "Dieu d'eau" [God of Water].

A. Statuary

Sculpture is man's work, done by the blacksmiths. It is of religious inspiration.

There are three centers of fabrication, whose productions differ in their form. These are the regions of Bamako, Bougouni (a veritable land of blacksmiths), and Kinian, of which the latter covers part of the Sikasso, Koutiala, and Ségou districts. (2)

2. Passim, Lem, "Sculptures soudanaises" [Sudanese Sculptures], Arts et métiers graphiques, Paris, 1948.

They make female statuettes, fertility statuettes, marionettes 545 used for theatrical representations given by the young people, masks for the different societies, and, in particular, a whole series of stylized antelopes, special symbols of the tchi wara dancers.

532 "Like the Chinese sculptor of the Han period, the Bambara 171 sees and fixes forms in terms of profiles. He practices openwork carving, cutting silhouettes which appear against the light as hieroglyphs with fixed and suggestive outlines. Giving interpretations to signs and forms borrowed from familiar animals, the Bambara combine and associate them to create figures emblematic of the tribe or clan, figures of recognition. This symbolic zoomorphism, the basis of heraldry, is that of the peoples of the great Asiatic steppe, that of the peoples of Mesopotamia and of Asia Minor; it was, in part, that of the Egyptians of the age of the Pharaohs who achieved in the valley of the Nile, predestined for this by its situation and its resources, the synthesis of a double culture." "Thus it is that the sculptor, in order to express his vision, often has recourse to the ideogram of geometric character, upon which is founded the conceptual character of the peoples of the steppe. (3)

3. Passim, F.H. Lem, Variété et unité des

533 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the
292 musicians wear a cuirass made of fana seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another djo is the So, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third djo is the djõ buru (buru, "trumpet"). This is the djo of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the N'ganian, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the griot who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the griot and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one
794 in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part:
522 these are the narratives of the members of the Kworé brotherhood. The Kworéduga are clowns, or rather commedia dell'arte players. One is a Kworéduga by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

545 794 522

Example:

Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)

Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)

Ida konieti aïe (you are right)

N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)

Or again:

Demise fentili (the rich young man)

Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)

Ida konie tinaïe (what you say is not true)

N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794

The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which contains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

535 881

Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 517

A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109]

CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181

In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.